

Joint CIA-KGB targeting of terrorism talked about

By Bill Gertz
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

CIA Director William Webster said yesterday that the governments of the United States and the Soviet Union have discussed establishing a joint CIA-KGB cooperative effort to combat international terrorism.

"I'm not lobbying for it," Mr. Webster told selected reporters at a breakfast meeting. "It is increasingly being suggested and hinted at, and at some point we'll be asked to make a recommendation on it."

Mr. Webster declined to elaborate but said the overtures on joint intelligence cooperation had come from various places, "including the Soviets."

A tape recording of his remarks was obtained by The Washington Times.

Joint CIA-KGB cooperation in terrorism would pose problems because of the need to protect intelligence sources, Mr. Webster said.

Differences of views over defining terrorists would also make cooperation difficult, he added.

"In trying to cope with terrorism you have the fundamental problem of 'is one man's terrorist another man's freedom fighter?'" Mr. Webster said.

Terrorist acts like the Dec. 21 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, "an act of violence against innocent civilians," is one area where "every civilized country" should support an investigation of the act, he said.

Soviet officials first approached Western governments in late 1986 about working together to oppose terrorism as part of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's new foreign policy initiatives.

Moscow was linked to the support and training of international terrorists by Reagan administration CIA chief William Casey, who said in a 1987 speech that the Soviets have been training up to 600 terrorists each year in training camps in Eastern Europe.

Mr. Webster said the suggestions of CIA-KGB cooperation "raises the whole issue of bilateral relations between intelligence agencies."

The CIA and KGB have been rivals in the international intelligence and espionage arena for the past 40 years.

Mr. Webster said despite the overtures on counterterrorism, the KGB intelligence service continues to be "more aggressive, but less confrontational."

"They are not seeking situations which would advertise their activity but we find them everywhere," he said. "There's been no pulling back from their intelligence collection in this country or in other parts of the world."



FBI Director William Webster

The KGB has been particularly active in attempting to steal high-technology data and items, he said.

The Soviet overtures on joint cooperation appear to be gestures resulting from Mr. Gorbachev's glasnost, or openness, policies, Mr. Webster said. The January meeting in Moscow between KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov and U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Jack Matlock was another similar gesture, he said.

State Department officials said at the time of the meeting that Mr. Kryuchkov assured Mr. Matlock that the KGB is fully supporting the Gorbachev reform program.

Mr. Webster said he has not seen any indications that the KGB is opposing Mr. Gorbachev's reforms. But he said the KGB is "a potential source of trouble" for Mr. Gorbachev if his reform program fails.

Rand Corporation Sovietologist Jeremy R. Azrael stated in a report on the KGB released last week that former KGB Chairman Viktor Chebrikov is the leading candidate to replace Mr. Gorbachev if hardliners pull off a coup to oust him.

Mr. Webster said the KGB currently appears to be on Mr. Gorbachev's "side of the aisle" in the struggle between reformers and hardliners.

The Washington Post _____
The New York Times _____
The Washington Times A4
The Wall Street Journal _____
The Christian Science Monitor _____
New York Daily News _____
USA Today _____
The Chicago Tribune _____

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Internally, Mr. Gorbachev may move to "decentralize" the power of the KGB by granting some internal security authority to another ministry.

Experts have suggested that the Soviet Interior Ministry may take over the KGB internal security function.